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"THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE IS THE LEGITIMATE SOURCE, AND THE HAPPINESS OF THE PEOPLE THE TRUE END OF GOVERNMENT."

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"POET'S CORNER."

Near the Banks of that lone River.

BY GEORGE W. MORRIS.

Near the banks of that lone river,
Where the water lilies grow,
Breathed the fairest flower that ever
Bloomed and faded years ago.

How we met and loved and parted,
None on earth can ever know—
Nor how pure and gentle-hearted
Beamed the mourned one years ago!

Like the stream with lilies laden,
Will life's future current flow,
Till in Heaven I meet the maiden
Fondly cherished years ago.

Hearts that love like mine forget not;
They're the same in weal or woe;
And that star of memory, set not,
In the grave of years ago.

APRIL.

BY N. P. WILLIS.

I have found violets. April hath come on,
And the cool wind feels softer, and the rain
Falls in the bearded drops of summer time.
You may hear birds at morning, and at eve
The tame dove lingers till the twilight falls,
Cooing upon the eves and drawing in
His beautiful, bright neck, and from the hills,
A murmur, like the hoarseness of the sea,
Tells the release of waters, and the earth
Sends up a pleasant smell, and the dry leaves
Are lifted by the grass, and so I know
That Nature, with her delicate ear, hath heard
The dropping of the velvet foot of Spring.
Take of my violets. I found them where
The liquid south stole o'er them, on a bank
That lean'd to running water. There's to me
A daintiness about these early flowers,
That touches me like poetry. They blow
With such a simple loveliness among
The common herbs of pasture, and breathe out
Their lives so unobtrusively, like hearts
Whose beatings are too gentle for the world.
I love to go in the capricious days
Of April, and hunt violets, when the rain
Is in the blue cups trembling, and they nod
So gracefully to the kisses of the wind.
It may be deem'd too idle, but the young
Read Nature like the manuscript of Heaven,
And call the flowers its poetry. Go out!
Ye spirits of habitual unrest,
And read it when the fever of the world,
Hath made your hearts impatient, and, if life
Hath yet one spring unpoison'd, it will be
Like a beguiling music to its flow,
And you will no more wonder that I love
To hunt for violets in the April time.

TALES AND SKETCHES.

From Putnam's Magazine.

A TOSS-UP FOR A HUSBAND.

FROM THE FRENCH OF VISCOMTE PONSON DU TERRAIL.

CHAPTER I.

The Marchioness was at her toilet. Florine and Aspasia, her two ladies maids, were busy powdering, as it were with hoar-frost, the bewitching widow.

She was a widow, this Marchioness, a widow of twenty-three, and wealthy as very few persons were any longer at the court of Louis XV., her god-father.

Three-and-twenty years earlier his Majesty had held her at the baptismal font of the chapel at Marley, and had settled upon her an income of a hundred thousand livres, by way of proving to her father, the Baron Frontevault, who had saved his life at the battle of Fontenoy, that Kings can be grateful, whatever people choose to say to the contrary.

The Marchioness then was a widow. She resided during the summer in a charming little chateau, situated half way up the slope overhanging the water on the road from Bougival to St. Germain. Madame Dubarry's estate adjoined hers, and on opening her eyes, she could see without rising, the white gable-ends, and the wide spreading chestnut-trees of Luciennes, perched upon the heights. On this particular day—it was noon—the Marchioness, whilst her attendants dressed her hair and arranged her head-dress with the most exquisite taste, gravely employed herself in tossing up alternately, a couple of fine oranges, which crossed each other in the air, and then dropped into the white and delicate hand that caught them in their fall.

The sleight-of-hand—which the Marchioness interrupted at times whilst she adjusted a beauty spot on her lip, or cast an impatient glance on the crystal clock that told how time was running away with the fair widow's precious moments—had lasted for ten minutes, when the folding doors were thrown open, and a valet such as one sees now only on the stage, announced with pompous voice—"The King!"

Apparently the Marchioness was accustomed to such visits, for she but half rose from her seat as she saluted with her most gracious smile the personage who entered.

It was indeed Louis XV. himself—Louis XV. at sixty-five; but robust, upright, with smiling lips and beaming eyes, and jauntily clad in a close-fitting, pearl-gray hunting suit, that became him to perfection. He carried under his arm a handsome fowling piece, inlaid with mother of pearl; a small pouch, intended for ammunition alone, hung over his shoulder.

The King had come from Luciennes, almost alone, that is to say with a captain of the guard, the old Marshal de Richelieu, and a single equerry on foot. He had been amusing himself quail shooting, loading his own gun, as was the fashion with his ancestors, the later Valois and the earlier Bourbons.—His grandsire, Henry IV., could not have been less ceremonious.

But a show or of rain had surprised him, and his Majesty had no relish for it. He pretended that the fire of an enemy's battery was less disagreeable than those drops of water, so small and so hard, that wet him through, and reminded him of his twinges of rheumatism.

Fortunately, he was but a few steps from the gateway of the chateau, when the shower commenced. He had come, therefore, to take shelter with his god daughter, having dismissed his suite, and only keeping with him a magnificent pointer, whose genealogy was fully established by the Duke de Richelieu, and traced back with a few slips of orthography, directly to Nisus, that celebrated greyhound given by Charles IX. to his friend Ronsard the poet.

'Good morning, Marchioness,' said the King, as he entered, putting down his fowling piece in a corner. 'I have come to ask your hospitality.—We were caught in a shower at your gate—Richelieu and I. I have packed off Richelieu.

'Ah, Sire, that wasn't very kind of you.'

'Hush!' replied the King, in a good humored tone. 'It's only mid-day, and if the Marshal had forced his way in here at as early an hour, he would have dragged of it everywhere, this very arrival on this very evening. He is very apt to compromise one, and he is a great coxcomb, too, the old duke. But don't put yourself out of the way, Marchioness, let Aspasia finish the becoming pile of your hair dress, and Florine spread out with her silver knife the scented powder that blends so well with the lilies and the roses of your bewitching face. Why, Marchioness, you are so pretty, one could eat you up!'

'You think me so, Sire?'

'I tell you so every day. Oh, what fine oranges.'

And the king seated himself upon the roomy sofa, by the side of the Marchioness, whose rosy finger-tips he kissed with an infinity of grace. Then taking up one of the oranges that he had admired, he proceeded leisurely to examine it.

'But, said he, at length, 'what are oranges doing by the side of your Chinese powder box and your scented bottles? Is there any connection between this fruit and the maintenance—easy as it is, Marchioness—of your charms?'

'These oranges,' replied the lady, gravely, 'fulfilled, just now, Sire, the functions of destiny.'

The King opened wide his eyes, and stroked the long ears of his dog, by way of giving the Marchioness time to explain her meaning.

'It was the Countess who gave them to me, she continued.

'Madame Dubarry?'

'Exactly so, Sire.'

'A trumpery gift, it seems to me Marchioness.'

'I hold it, on the contrary, to be an important one; since I repeat to your Majesty, that these oranges decide my fate.'

'I give it up,' said the King.

'Imagine, Sire; yesterday I found the Countess occupied in tossing her oranges up and down, in this way.' And the Marchioness recommenced her game with a skill that cannot be described.

'I see,' said the King; 'she accompanied this singular amusement with the word, 'Up Choiseul! up Praslin!' I can fancy how the pair jumped.'

'Precisely so, Sire.'

'And do you dabble in Politics, Marchioness? Have you a fancy for uniting with the Countess, just to mortify my poor ministers?'

'By no means sire; for in place of Monsieur de Choiseul and the Duke de Praslin, I was saying to myself, just now, 'Up, Menneval! up, Beaugency!'

'Ay, ay,' returned the King; 'and why the deuce would you have them jumping, those two good-looking gentlemen—Monsieur de Menneval, who is a Croesus, and Monsieur de Beaugency, who is a statesman, and dances the minuet to perfection.'

'I'll tell you said the dame, 'You know, Sire, that Monsieur de Menneval is an accomplished gentleman, a handsome man, a gallant cavalier and an indefatigable dancer, witty as Monsieur Arouet, and longing for nothing so much as to live in the country on his estate in Touraine, on the banks of the Loire, with the woman whom he loves of with love, far from the Court, from grandeur and from turmoil.'

'And on my life, he's in the right of it quoth the King. 'One does become so wearied at Court.'

'Aye, and no,' rejoined the widow as she put on her last beauty spot. 'Nor are you unaware, Sire, that Monsieur de Beaugency is one of the most brilliant courtiers of Marly and of Versailles; ambitious; burning with zeal for the service of your Majesty; as brave as Monsieur de Menneval; and capable of going to the end of the earth—with the title of Ambassador of the King of France.'

'I know that,' chimed in Louis XV., with a laugh. 'But alas, I have many more ambassadors than embassies. My ante-chambers overflow every morning.'

'Now, continued the Marchioness, 'I have been a widow these two years past.'

'A long time, there's no denying.'

'Ah,' sighed she, 'there's no need to tell me so, Sire. But Monsieur de Menneval loves me—at least he says so, and I am easily persuaded.'

'Very well; then marry Monsieur de Menneval.'

'I have thought of it, Sire; and in truth, I might do much worse. I should like well enough to live in the country, under the willow trees on the borders of the river, with a husband fond, yielding, loving, who would detest the philosophers and set some little value on the poets. When no external noises disturb the honey moon, that month, Sire, may be indefinitely prolonged. In the country, you know, one never hears a noise.'

'Unless it be the north-wind moaning, in the corridor, and the rain pattering on the window panes.—And the King shivered slightly on his sofa.

'But, added the dame, 'Monsieur de Beaugency loves me equally well.'

'Ah, ha! the ambitious man.'

'Ambition does not shut out love, Sire. Monsieur de Beaugency is a Marquis; he is twenty-five; he is ambitious. I should like a husband vastly who was longing to reach high offices of state. Greatness has its own particular merit.'

'Then marry Monsieur de Beaugency.'

'I have thought of that also! but this poor Monsieur de Menneval.'

'Very good,' exclaimed the King, laughing. 'Now I see to what purpose the oranges are destined. Monsieur de Menneval pleases you; Monsieur de Beaugency would suit you just as well; and since one can't have more than one husband, you make them each jump in turn.'

'Just so, Sire. But observe what happens.'

'Ah, what does happen?'

'That unwilling and unable to play unfairly, I take equal pains to catch the oranges as they come down, and that I catch them both each time.'

'Will are you willing that I should take part in your game?'

'You Sire? Ah, what a joke that would be!'

'I am very clumsy, Marchioness. To a certainty, in less than three minutes, Beaugency and Menneval will be rolling on the floor.'

'Ah!' exclaimed the lady, 'and if you have any preference for one or the other?'

'No; we'll do better. Look, I take the two oranges, you mark them carefully, or, better still, you stick into one of them one of these toilet pins, making up your own mind which of the two is to represent Monsieur de Beaugency, and leaving me on that point entirely in the dark. If Monsieur de Beaugency touch the floor, you shall marry Menneval; if it happen just otherwise, you shall resign yourself to become an old maid.'

'Excellent! Now Sire, let's see the result.'

The King took the two oranges and plied shuttle with them above his head. But, at the third pass the two rolled down upon the embroidered carpet, and the Marchioness broke out into a merry fit of laughter.

'I foresaw as much, exclaimed his Majesty. 'What a clumsy fellow I am!'

'And we more puzzled than ever, Sire!'

'So we are, Marchioness; but the best thing we can do, is to slide the oranges, sugar them well, and season them with a dash of West India rum. Then you can beg me to taste them, and offer me some of those preserved cherries and peaches that you put up as nicely as my daughter Adelaide.'

'And Monsieur de Menneval? and Monsieur de Beaugency? said the Marchioness, in piteous accents. 'How is the question to be settled?'

Louis XV. began to cogitate.

'Are you quite sure,' said he, 'that both of them are in love with you?'

'Probably so,' returned she with a little coquettish smile, sent back to her from the mirror opposite.

'And their love is equally strong?'

'I trust so, Sire.'

'And I don't believe a word of it.'

'Ah!' said the Marchioness, 'but that is in truth, a most terrible supposition. Besides, Sire, they are on their way hither.'

'Both of them?'

One after the other: the Marquis at one o'clock precisely; the Baron at two. I promised them my decision to-morrow, on condition that they would pay me a final visit to-day.'

As the Marchioness finished, the valet, who had announced the King, came to inform his mistress that Monsieur de Beaugency was in the drawing-room, and solicited the favor of admission to pay his respects.

'Capital!' said Louis XV., smiling as tho' he were eighteen; 'show Monsieur de Beaugency in. Marchioness, you will receive him, and tell him the price that you set upon your hand.'

'And what is this price, Sire?'

'You must give him the choice—either to renounce you, or consent to send in to me his resignation of his appointments, in order that he may get and bury himself with his wife on his estate of Courlac, in Poitou, there to live the life of a country gentleman.'

'And then Sire?'

'You will allow him a couple of hours for reflection, and so dismiss him.'

'And then in the end?'

'The rest is my concern.' And the King got up taking his dog and his gun, and concealed himself behind a screen, drawing also a curtain, that he might be more completely hidden.

'What is your intention, Sire?' asked the Marchioness.

'I conceal myself, like the Kings of Persia, from the eyes of my subjects, replied Louis XV. 'Hush! Marchioness.'

A few moments later, and Monsieur de Beaugency entered the room.

CHAPTER II.

The Marquis was a charming cavalier: tall, slight, with a moustache black and curling upwards, an eye sparkling and intelligent, a Roman nose, an Austrian lip, a firm step, a noble and imposing presence.

The Marchioness blushed slightly at sight of him, but offered him her hand to kiss; and as she begged him by gesture to be seated, thus inwardly took counsel with herself.

'Decidedly, I believe that the test is useless; it is Monsieur de Beaugency whom I love. How proud shall I be to lean upon his arm at the /courtfetes! With what delight shall I keep long watches in the cabinet of his Excellency the Ambassador, whilst he is busy with his Majesty's affairs.'

But after this aside, the Marchioness resumed her gracious and coquettish air; as though the woman comprehended the mission of refined gallantry which was reserved for her seductive and delicate epoch by an indulgent Providence, that laid by its anger and its evil days for the subsequent reign.

'Marchioness, said Monsieur de Beaugency, as he held in his hands the rosy fingers of the lively widow. 'It is full a week since you received me.'

'A week? why you were here yesterday!'

'Then I must have counted the hours for ages.'

'A compliment which may be found in one of the younger Crebillon's book's!'

'You are hard upon me, Marchioness.'

'Perhaps so—it comes naturally,—I am tired.'

'Ah, Marchioness! Heaven knows that I would make of your existence one never-ending fete!'

'That would, at least, be wearisome.'

'Say a word, Madam, one single word, and my fortune, my future prospects, my ambition!'—

'You are still then as ambitious as ever?'

'More than ever, since I have been in love with you.'

'Is that necessary?'

'Beyond a doubt. Ambition—what is it but honors, wealth, the envious looks of impotent rivals, the admiration of the crowd, the favor of monarchs?—And is not one's love unanswerably and most triumphantly proved, in laying all this at the feet of the woman whom one adores?'

'You may be right.'

'I may be right, Marchioness! Listen to me, my fair lady-love.'

'I am all attention, sir.'

'Between us, who are well-born, and consort not with plebeians, that vulgar and sentimental sort of love, which is painted by those who write books for your mantuamakers and chambermaids, would be in excellent, bad taste. It would be but slighting love and making no account of its enjoyment, were we to go and bury it in some obscure corner of the Provinces, or of Paris—we, who belong to Versailles—living away there with it, in monotonous solitude and unchanging contemplation!'

'Ah!' said the marchioness, 'you think so?'

'Tell me rather, of the fetes that dazzle one with lights, with noise, with smiles, with wit, through which one glides, introduced, like the fair conquest in triumph on one's arm.

'Why hide one's happiness in place of vaunting it? The jealousy of the world does but increase, and cannot diminish it. My uncle, the cardinal, stands well at Court. He has the King's ear, and better still, the Countess. He will, ere long, procure me one of the Northern embassies. Cannot you fancy yourself, Madame, the Ambassadress, treading the gallery of the throne room, as royally as royalty with the highest nobility of a kingdom—having the men at your feet, and the women on lower seats around, whilst you yourself are occupant of a throne, and wield a sceptre?'

And as Monsieur de Beaugency, warmed with his own eloquence, he gently slid from his seat to the knees of the Marchioness, whose hand he covered with kisses.

She listened to him, with a smile on her lips, and then abruptly said to him:

'Rise, Sir, and hear me in return. Are you in truth sincerely attached to me?'

'With my whole soul, Marchioness?'

'Are you prepared to make every sacrifice?'

'Every one, Madam.'

'That is fortunate indeed; for to be prepared for all, is to accomplish one, without the slightest difficulty; and it is but a single one that I require?'

'Oh, speak! Must a throne be conquered?'

'By no means sir. You must only call to mind that you own a fine chateau in Poitou.'

'Pooh!' said Monsieur de Beaugency, 'a shed.'

'Every man's house is his castle,' replied the widow. 'And having called it to mind, you need only order post-horses?'

'For what purpose?'

'To carry me off to Courlac. It is there that your almoner shall unite us, in the chapel, in presence of your domestics and your vassals, our only witnesses.'

'A singular whim, Marchioness; but I submit to it.'

'Very well, we will set out this evening.—Ah! I forgot.'

'What further?'

'Before starting, you will send in your resignation to the King.'

Monsieur de Beaugency almost bounded from his seat.

'Do you dream of that, Marchioness?'

'Assuredly. You will not, at Courlac, be able to perform your duties at court.'

'And on returning?'

'We will not return.'

'We will—not—return!' slowly ejaculated Monsieur de Beaugency. 'Where then shall we proceed?'

'Nowhere. We will remain at Courlac.'

'All the summer?'

'And all the winter. I count upon settling myself there, after our marriage. I have a horror of the court. I do not like the turmoil. Grandeur wearies me. I look forward only to a simple and charming country life, to the tranquil and happy existence of the forgotten lady of the castle.—What matters it to you? You were ambitious for my love's sake. I care but little for ambition; you ought to care for it less, since in love with me.'

'But, Marchioness—'

'Hush! it's a bargain. Still, for form's sake, I give you one hour to reflect. There, pass out that way; go into the winter drawing room that you will find at the end of the gallery, and send me your answer upon a leaf of your tablets. I am about to complete my toilet, which I left unfinished to receive you.'

And the Marchioness opened a door, bowed Monsieur de Beaugency into the corridor, and closed the door upon him.

'Marchioness,' cried the king from his hiding place and through the screen, 'you will offer Monsieur de Manneval the embassy to Prussia, which I promise you for him.'

'And you will not emerge from your retreat?'

'Certainly not, Madame; it is far more amusing to remain behind the scenes. One hears all, laughs at one's ease, and is not troubled with saying anything.'

It struck two. Monsieur de Manneval was announced. His Majesty remained snug, and shammed dead.

CHAPTER III.

Monsieur de Manneval was, at all points, a cavalier who yielded nothing to his rival, Monsieur de Beaugency. He was fair. He had a blue eye, a broad forehead, a mouth that wore a dreamy expression, and that somewhat pensive air which became so well the Troubadours of France in the olden time.

We cannot say that Monsieur de Manneval had perpetrated verse; but he loved the poets, the arts, the quiet of the fields, the sunset, the rosy dawn, the breeze sighing through the foliage, the low and mysterious tones of the harp, sounding at eve from the light bark shooting over the blue waters of the Loire—all things, in short, that harmonized with that melodious concert of the human heart, which passes by the name of love.

He was timid, but he passionately loved the beautiful widow; and his dearest dream was of passing his whole life at her feet, in well chosen retirement, far from those envious lookers on, who are ever ready to fling their sarcasms on quiet happiness, and who dissemble their envy under cloak of a philosopher's scepticism.

He trembled, as he entered the Marchioness's boudoir. He remained standing before her, and blushed as he kissed her hand. At length, encouraged by a smile, emboldened by the solemnity of this coveted interview, he spoke to her of his love, with a poetic simplicity and an unpremeditated warmth of heart—the genuine enthusiasm of a priest, who has faith in the object of his adoration.

And as he spoke, the Marchioness sighed, and said within herself:

'He is right. Love is happiness. Love is to be two indeed, but one at the same time; and to be free from those importunate interneddlers, the indifference or the mocking attention of the world.'

She remembered, however, the advice of the King, and thus addressed the Baron:

'What will you indeed, do, in order to convince me of your affection?'

'All that man can do.'

The Baron was less bold than Monsieur de Beaugency, who had talked of conquering a throne. He was probably more sincere.

'I am ambitious,' said the widow.

'Ah! replied Monsieur de Manneval, sorrowfully.

'And I would that the man whom I marry should aspire to every thing, and achieve every thing.

'I will try to do so, if you wish it.

'Listen: I give you an hour to reflect. I am, you know, the King's god daughter, and have begged of him an embassy for you.

'Ah!' said Monsieur de Manneval, with indescribable emotion, 'he has granted my request.'

'He has granted my request. If you love me, you will accept the offer. We will be married this evening, and your Excellency, the Ambassador to Prussia, will set off for Berlin immediately after the nuptials. Reflect. I grant you an hour.'

'It is useless; I have no need of reflection, for I love you. Your wishes are my orders; to obey you is my only desire. I accept the embassy.'

'Never mind!' said she, trembling with joy and blushing deeply. 'Hasten into the room, wherein you were just now waiting.—I must complete my toilet, and I shall then be at your service. I will summon you.'

The Marchioness handed out the Baron by the right hand door, as she had handed out the Marquis by the left; and then said to herself:

'I shall be prettily embarrassed if Monsieur de Beaugency should consent to end his days at Courlac!'

Thereupon the King removed the screen and re-appeared.

His Majesty stepped quietly to the round table whereon he had replaced the oranges, and took up one of them.

'Ah!' exclaimed the Marchioness, 'I perceive, Sire, that you foresee the difficulty that is about to spring up, and go back accordingly to the oranges in order to settle it.'

As his sole reply, Louis XV. took a small, ivory-handled pen-knife from his waistcoat pocket, made an incision in the rind of the orange, peeled it off very neatly, divided the fruit into two parts, and offered one to the astonished Marchioness.

'But, Sire, what are you doing?' was her eager inquiry.

'You see that I am eating the orange.'

'But—'

'It was no manner of use to us.'

'You have decided then?'

'Unquestionably. Monsieur de Menneval loves you much better than Monsieur de Beaugency.'

'That's not quite certain yet; let us wait.'

'Look,' said the King, pointing to the valet, who entered with a note from the Marquis.

'You'll soon see.'

The widow opened the note, and read:

'Madam, I love you—Heaven is my witness; and to give you up is the most cruel of sacrifices. But I am a gentleman. A gentleman belongs to the King. My life, my blood are his. I cannot without forfeit of my loyalty, abandon his service——'

'Et cetera,' chimed in the King, 'as was observed by the Abbe Fleury, my tutor.—Marchioness, call in Monsieur de Menneval.'

Monsieur de Menneval entered, and was greatly troubled to see the King in the widow's boudoir.

'Baron,' said his Majesty, 'Monsieur de Beaugency was deep in love with the Marchioness; but he was more deeply still in love—since he would not renounce it, to please her—with the embassy to Prussia.—And you, you love the Marchioness much better than you love me, since you would only enter my service for her sake. This leads me to believe that you would be but a luke-warm public servant, and that Monsieur de Beaugency will make an excellent ambassador. He will start for Berlin this evening; and you shall marry the Marchioness. I will be present at the ceremony.'

'Marchioness,' whispered Louis XV. in the ear of his god daughter, 'true love is that which does not shrink from a sacrifice.'

'And the King peeled the second orange and eat it, as he placed the hand of the widow in that of the Baron.

Then he added:

'I have been making three persons happy: the Marchioness, whose indecision I have relieved: the Baron who shall marry her; and Monsieur de Beaugency, who will perchance prove a sorry ambassador. In all this, I have only neglected my own interest, for I have been eating oranges without sugar—And yet they pretend to say that I am a selfish Monarch!'

Consumption of Sugar.

Last year there were consumed, in this country about 705,000,000 pounds of cane sugar, and 27,000,000 pounds of maple sugar. This gives more than 24 pounds of cane sugar, and 1 pound of maple sugar, to every man, woman, and child. If this were put into barrels holding 200 lbs., and each barrel occupied the space of three square feet only, it would require 336 acres of land for it to stand upon. The barrels if placed in a row would reach 280 miles. If this sugar were put up in paper packages of 5 pounds each, it would require 146,400,000 sheets of wrapping paper; and if only a yard of twine was used to each package, there would be required 438,200,000 feet, or 83,000 miles of string—more than enough to reach three times around the earth. If every retail clerk sold 100 pounds of sugar each day, it would require nearly 25,000 clerks to sell it in a year. If the dealer, wholesale and retail together, made a profit of only two cents a pound on this sugar, these profits alone would amount to nearly $15,000,000.—*Scientific American.*

FRENCH SOLDIERS.—It is said that of the three hundred thousand conscripts who composed the French army class of 1851, but 50 out of every 100 knew how to read and write. The average height of the men was but 5 feet 5 inches—or about the same as the class of the preceding year. This is probably a less height than would be obtained in any other civilized nation. The French army is remarked by all strangers to be composed of small men. But, they generally possess a wiry, sinewy frame, are encumbered with no extra flesh, and are capable of enduring great fatigue, making, perhaps, a more efficient army than would soldiers of more colossal proportions.

☞ Quite an episode to the unusually dull session at Harrisburg, occurred in the House on Monday. Mr. Cook of Westmoreland was speaking very severely of some one in power, when the Speaker ordered him to take his seat, but he refused; the Sergeant-at-Arms was ordered to arrest him, but he refused also. Mr. Cook dared any to lay hands upon him—declared that he represented 20,000 freemen whose rights had been trampled upon—that he would never yield. Mr. Cook is a modest, slender young man, a Methodist preacher, and has been foremost in defending a sale of the public works.—*Lewisburg Chronicle.*

☞ A Paris paper announces that Napoleon III. and the Emperor of Russia has communicated with Berlin, offering to evacuate the Principalities, if the Sultan will eat pork chops in public with the Greek Patriarch and afterwards in unleavened bucks-tran, drink the health of the God of Russia.

☞ A land slide at Brooklyn Heights, L. I. on Sunday afternoon, crushed a frame house in which were 7 or 8 persons. At the latest accounts two of the victims had been taken out dead.

ISTHMUS OF DARIEN.

CHARACTER AND HABITS OF THE INHABITANTS.

In common with other portions of the American continent, when first visited by Europeans, this Isthmus seems to be inhabited by aboriginal Indians, sparsely scattered along the little streams, or gathered in hamlets among the mountain passes; their only means of communication with each other, or with the world without, being the canoe, rudely shaped from the native tree, the river serving as a highway to bear it towards the ocean.

From one hamlet to another among the mountains there were paths so obscure as to be useless except to the keen-eyed Indian himself.

Of their social state little is known. In their habits they were exceedingly simple, subsisting mostly on the natural fruits of the country, with a few fish and some of the lizard tribe which abounds in these regions.

The Indian of this country is smaller in stature, milder in his disposition, and possessed of less *criminal* courage, than those who inhabit the more northern portions of the continent. Indisposed to all sorts of physical hardship, he is content to repose under the shade of a palm-tree during midday heat, and the protection of a rude roof of the same material serves as a shelter from rain or night dews.

Such were the people whom the Spaniards conquered and reduced to Slavery—converting them, also, by the same process to Romanism—introducing into the hearts of these poor, benighted infidels the blessed religion of the Cross, with the point of the bayonet or the edge of the sword—thundering forth, all the time, unanswerable arguments from the mouths of cannon.

Another boon conferred by these Spanish missionaries upon this country, was the introduction of African slavery in its most hideous forms.

The revolutionary movement which resulted, in most of the South American States, in their emancipation from Spanish domination, was soon followed, in nearly all of them, by a movement towards the abolition of slavery, which has resulted in the accomplishment of that most desirable end, among others, in all those states now comprising the Republic of New Granada.

During the struggle between the revolutionary party and the supporters of the Spanish Crown, most of the wealthy Europeans residing in the country joined the latter, and when the revolution was consummated and slavery abolished, they left the country with whatever they could save from the wreck of their fortunes.

Thus, we see, the present race of men who inhabit this country are descended from the native Indians and the emancipated slaves, with a slight sprinkling of white blood from adventurers, pirates and regenades from all nations under the sun.

The African blood greatly predominates over all other foreign mixtures, and the race may truly be considered degenerated physically, and morally.

The religion of the country is Roman Catholic, strangely enough mixed with the ceremonials of the pagan rites of the aboriginal inhabitants. The Catholic priesthood of the country having, with their accustomed sagacity, so modified their ceremonials, mingling with them enough of the ancient usages to render the whole attractive to the natives.

There is no system of education that places the means of mental culture and elevation practically within reach of the masses of the people. Through the influence of the priesthood, who are still powerful, every effort to establish a system of education like our own, has been rendered abortive. The tendency, however is to improvement in this respect, and we anticipate that the time is not very far distant when better counsels will prevail.

Among the common people, marriage is scarcely ever solemnized. The parties live together as man and wife, each reserving the right to leave the other, as interest or caprice may dictate. Now and then a case occurs where the parties continue faithful to each other for life. These, however, are exceptions to the rule. In a great majority of cases, women are left after a few years, with a brood of helpless children, to meet the vicissitudes of life as best they can; and the chance for children so situated to become reputable men and women, or useful citizens, is small indeed. I have seen women with two, three, or more children, who when asked, "Is the father of your children living?" answered, "Yes; each child has a father living."

It is only very recently, that marriages performed by others than ecclesiastics have been legal, and the fees established by the church have been so enormous as to place them beyond the reach of the poorer classes. It is doubtful however, whether the people will avail themselves of the recent law—they prefer the present arrangement.

Along the line of railroad, as well as of the Chagres river, and about all of the principal towns, the inhabitants are made up of a motley assemblage of West Indian negroes and natives of Central and South America. These people are generally dissipated, filthy, treacherous, untrustworthy, and beastly in the worst sense of the word. There are of course, exceptions to this, their general character. From this class of population come most of the desperadoes who have perpetrated thefts, robberies and murders along the route between Navy Bay and Panama.

Most of the boatmen upon the Chagres are of this class, and so also are the muleteers and guides with whom the traveler meets, and by whom he is imposed upon in crossing the Isthmus.

As we recede from the great line of travel and approach the rural districts, there is a much more marked tendency to a predominance of Indian feature, and the population of these rural districts are regarded as much more honest, faithful, kind and obliging, possessing however, very little energy or industry. They are simple, contented, temperate, and with very few wants, and those easily supplied. Many of the landholders in this country, lay claim to enormous tracts, often several miles in extent, and without any definite line of demarkation or boundary—sometimes no sign of any clearing except a few acres about the residence of the landlord; and, yet, no person is allowed to pasture cattle, or erect any sort of edifice on this claim without permission from the pretended owner.

There are no fences, and I have known twenty rods of road that was fairly strewn with more than one wheel could pass over, independent of the railroad.

The use of the plough is unknown, the machete serving as an axe, hoe, plough and sickle, as well as weapon of warfare.

The native, with his machete, clears the timber from the land and with its point makes a hole in the ground where he deposits his seeds, using the same for cutting down the weeds, as well as for harvesting the grain.

The soil in most parts of the country is of amazing fertility, and capable, when well tilled, of sustaining immense crops of all sorts of tropical fruits and grains. The fruits that grow almost spontaneously are cocoa-nut, orange, plantain, banana, limes, lemons, &c., &c. Indian corn, coffee, rice, sugar-cane, yams, melons, &c. &c. have been successfully cultivated on a small scale.

Many of these landlords have immense herds of cattle roaming over their possessions. I have seen several hundreds claimed as the property of one man, the only expense or trouble attending the ownership being that of herding them once a year for the purpose of marking the calves. Goats, asses, hogs, poultry, &c., may be raised (and are) in some districts.

One can hardly fail of being strongly impressed with the many points of resemblance between the habits of life of these people and those of the patriarchal ages, as described in the book of Genesis. The large herds of cattle, goats and asses, and, to a certain extent, their nomadic life, continually call to mind Abraham and Lot with their families; and the condition of families so much resembling concubinage, to which I have referred above. Women with huge jars (pitchers) filled with water on their heads—their simple attire, the sandaled feet—and groups of men, women and children squatting on the ground, at the door of the cabin, (tent,) and even the manner of gathering as well as cooking their fruits, and preparing their meals—tend to impress one strongly with the idea, that oriental times and habits have come down to us in all their simplicity.

The inhabitants reside mostly in huts made of bamboo poles, the lower ends of which are placed in a trench dug in the ground, while the upper ends are tied together with thongs cut from untanned hides. These huts are covered with palm leaves. They are entirely destitute of floors—a dried bullock's hide serves as a couch for the night, and a seat as well as a table for day.

The attire of the men is of the simplest kind; some of the more enterprising and wealthy own a shirt; and in a very few cases I have known the luxury of pantaloons indulged in on great occasions.

The dress of a full-grown boy of fourteen or fifteen, consists of a broad-brimmed palmleaf hat on his head, sandals on his feet, and a cigar in his mouth—"*y no mas.*"

Young ladies of the same age are a trifle more elaborately dressed, sometimes wearing a *garment* which covers the person *below* the pectoral region admirably.

Children grow up in indolence and listless inaction, not the slightest effort being made by the parents to develope the mental or physical powers. Occasionally we meet a female among the more wealthy, who would fairly put to the blush a North American squaw, or a New York fashionable belle in the ingenuity manifested in groping together gaudy ornaments about her person—the immense flounces upon their dresses reminding one (as a friend the other day remarked) of a barrel of French brandy on end, nearly concealed by hoops—and the peculiarly happy contrivances to expose to view the shoulders and upper portions of the chestin front, would furnish models for the cooper.

A lady of my acquaintance, who is by far, the best looking native female I have seen, having a fair proportion of Spanish blood in her veins, (known as "the Padre's sister" of San Pablo, affords a good example of the better order of New Granadian women. Señora Juanita has several children, among whom are two well-grown boys, who may be seen any day promenading in front of madame's house stark naked, forming a most interesting pair of cupids.

My friend, Dr. B. remarked to me the other day, that the admirers of Grecian and Roman mythology, and of the innocence and grace of pastoral life, might undoubtedly refresh their æsthetic natures by a residence of a few months among these "naked realities" of that stage of human civilization and development, upon which they bestow such warm encomiums.

The lady herself may be seen of an afternoon swinging in her hammock, smoking her cigar, and—start not, gentle reader—quizzing *a la Americaine*; and frequently with an amount of jewelry, mostly in solid gold, that has been estimated by good judges to be worth (valued merely at the price of gold dust) not less than $3,000. She has one chain composed entirely of gold coins fastened together with links of the same material, the coins being mostly double eagles, doubloons, eagles, half eagles and sovereigns, which when thrown around her neck, will hang, double, to below the knees.

The future destiny of this country is, of course, a subject of speculation. I may, in a future letter, notice the indications of an important change in the political relations of this land, which are unmistakably presenting themselves to the observer. The event may not occur suddenly, or soon, but it will come.

Nautical Novel.

BY A PLAGIARIST.

Gulf of Mexico—small ships; young man, very interesting; very romantic; black glossy curls; aquiline features; florid complexion; commanding figure; black cloak; pipe all hands to quarters; storm coming on; very dangerous; all hands to the pumps; there goes the jib; mast cut away; stove a hole; leaking; all hands pumped, monster ship in the distance; very suspicious; black flag; skull and cross bones; pirate; sailors fearful; young man determined; husband to die on parish in the attempt; armed to the teeth; fine dresses the sailors; great enthusiasm; fog of the free; die for our country; pirate approaches; hundred guns; pirate captain; big whiskers; crew all fiends; call for a surrender; young man scorns; boarding; female shrieks on board the pirate ship; beauty in distress; young man vows vengeance; young man's ship sinking; flag shot off; nails it to the mast; crew leave in boats; several pile on attack boat; sails two with a thump; volcano; throws others overboard; sharks around the vessel; young man kills pirate captain; pirates give up; Mount Vernon; victory; young man rushes into cabin; finds young lady nearly dead; brings her to life; in love; appears discovered; young man son of nobleman; young lady rich heiress; tell her story; was stolen away by pirates; sold to pirate captain; heaven sent; young man rescues her; fall on his knees; young lady swoons; her father; young man promoted; land ahead; they are; Yankee Doodle; finis.

☞ Children cry for Fletcher's Castoria.